

Antwar Veterans Accused Of Training Political Killers

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By Timothy Robinson
Washington Post Staff Writer

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6—One of eight antiwar protesters on trial here on riot conspiracy charges told a government informer he was training "political assassination squads" on an isolated farm, the informer testified today.

The testimony of William W. Lemmer painted the Vietnam Veterans Against the War members on trial here as members of a highly secret VVAW hierarchy that watched and gave demonstrations with a bizarre arsenal of weapons.

Lemmer, a former Arkansas VVAW leader, said he had seen the defendants demonstrate crossbows by firing metal-tipped arrows through eight inches of wood; use sling shots to propel smoke bombs at a nearby house in Gainesville rented by a conservative organization; use sling shots to shoot "fried marbles," regular marbles and lead weights at tin cans and an abandoned refrigerator, and shoot a derringer into a stack of papers. He also testified that alleged main co-conspirator Scott Camil had showed him bolas made out of lead weights and fishing line that he intended to use to trip horses being ridden by mounted policemen.

Lemmer is believed to be the key government witness in the case against the VVAW. Defense attorneys have indicated they hope to discredit his testimony by pointing out what they say is a past history of mental disability and statements that Lemmer intended to bring "vengeance" upon the anti-war organization.

The eight defendants are accused of conspiracy to cause riots at the Republican convention in Miami last summer. They have contended that the case is a Nixon administration attempt to justify the Watergate break-in and to discredit the VVAW.

Lemmer started his testimony with a history of his first contact with VVAW in early 1971, and moved quickly to his first meetings with defendant Camil later that same year. At one of those, in Kansas City, Camil told him about the political assassination squads that he intended to call "Phoenix II," Lemmer said.

"Persons associated, like myself, with a branch known as the Special Forces, were told they were the military righthand of the CIA. In early 1960s, there was a project called Phoenix, calling for the assassination or the simple elimination of people that were said to be . . . [the Communist cadre in South Vietnam," Lemmer said.

Lemmer said Camil told him his political assassination squads were being trained at a farm, which had facilities for "rifle, pistol and mortar practice."

The informer said further that Camil told him he was arming his squads by trading drugs for guns.

While the day session was devoted to the trial of the eight antiwar protesters by the government, their defense attorneys spent a night session trying to prove that two FBI agents found in a telephone wireroom adjoining the defense offices were attempting to bug them.

Electronics experts placed on the stand by the defense, prosecution and judge all agreed that the men could have been bugging the room in various ways with the instruments they carried in a briefcase when they were found there last week. But when Judge Arnow asked each if he found any evidence that such bugging had been done or was being done, each replied, "No, sir."

The two FBI agents, who said previously they were in the room to check FBI lines for bugs, took the stand tonight and reiterated their stories. One, Robert Romans, said he had previously worked on the Gainesville conspiracy case and was detailed to Gainesville this week for administrative duties in connection with it, but said he went into the telephone room with agent Carl Ekblad only out of curiosity.

Ekblad said his duties included making checks for bugs in all FBI offices in this area of Florida at least once a year. The hearing into the alleged bugging incident continues Tuesday night.

Defense attorneys moved for a mistrial when Lemmer gave his political assassination squad testimony, saying

such squads were not discussed in the indictments and claiming his remarks were inflammatory and prejudicial. U.S. District Judge Winston E. Arnow denied the motion.

After telling of meetings last May in Gainesville at which the various weapons were demonstrated, Lemmer moved on to the VVAW's discovery that same weekend that he was an informer.

That discovery came when a veteran from Arkansas called Camil in Gainesville and told him Lemmer was working for the FBI.

"Camil and [co-defendant John] Kniffin went into the bedroom for about an hour while I waited in a living room. They came out, stood there looked at me, and I said 'I guess we'd better sit down and talk.'" Lemmer testified.

Lemmer said he told Camil and Kniffin that he was not interested in any criminal acts planned by the organization, but merely in their political beliefs. "At that time I told them I had been acting as a political monitor for the FBI," Lemmer said.

Instead of turning on him, Lemmer testified, Camil asked instead whether Lemmer could put him in contact with the CIA to do similar employment work.

"He asked me if I would in fact tell someone he could be bought for \$14,000," a figure that Lemmer said Camil told him represented outstanding legal fees.

"This concept of himself [as CIA informer] was code named by Camil as Red Dragon," Lemmer said.

Even after this discussion, Lemmer testified that he continued to be considered an insider and drove with Camil and others to Miami where another defendant allegedly showed them color-coded maps where violence could occur during the convention.

The alleged weapons demonstration and secret talks about Miami violence plans occurred mostly in the attic of a Gainesville house rented by Camil, Lemmer said.

It was from this attic that Lemmer said the VVAW shot smoke bombs for practice toward a nearby house rented by the Young

Americans for Freedom.

The wrist-braced sling shots, which are sold for use in hunting small game, fired the smoke bombs at a range of between 50 and 100 meters, Lemmer said.

Lemmer, who often prefaced his answers to prosecutor Jack Carrouth with the word "sir," told of telephone codes being discussed so members of the alleged conspiracy could communicate without detection.

While much of the weapon demonstration was confined to the attic, Camil one night without warning pulled a derringer from a sock in the living room and fired it into a stack of papers that had been brought there by the radical Zippie organization, Lemmer testified.